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YUGOSLAVIA: Reluctant Green Light to Military

Defense Minister Kadijevic's threat to use force to prevent the dissolution of the country appears to be gaining support. Prime Minister Markovic at a press conference Tuesday implicitly approved the use of force to disarm republic territorial defense forces and refused to distance himself from the military position. Markovic, previously seen as an interlocutor with Slovenia, Croatia, and Belgrade, warned that any republic that seceded without federal approval would pay a "heavy price." Franjo Tudjman's Croatian government yesterday called for the removal of Kadijevic, stating that Croatia has the right to decide the fate of its armed forces.

Markovic's statements probably have more to do with the limits on his power and his interpretation of the political balance than with his enthusiasm for intervention. Moreover, his remarks indicate that military commanders have the political initiative and may be ready to take matters into their own hands. Markovic's move will further erode his credibility and that of his government, which is already weakened by his party's poor showing in republic elections last month in Macedonia and Bosnia.

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